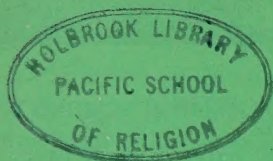


SOCIAL ACTION

A MAGAZINE OF CHRISTIAN CONCERN

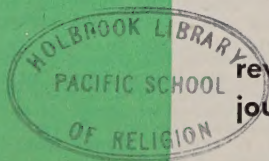


the family:

...then and now
...on the move
...social action
...Christian teaching



a report on
Billy Graham



**reviews: long day's
journey into night**

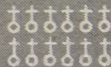
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1957/59

SOCIAL ACTION

September 1957

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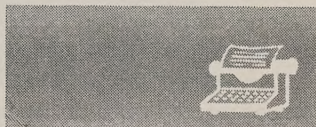


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• **Subscriptions**, \$2.00 per year; \$3.75 for two years; five or more yearly subscriptions to one address at \$1.50 each; single copies, 25c; 10 or more copies at 20c. Editorial and Subscription Offices, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York • Copyright, 1957 by the COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION.

• **Social Action** is published monthly except in June, July and August by the Council for Christian Social Action of the United Church of Christ, which continues the work of the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches and of the Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. *Chairman*, HENRY C. KOCH; *Vice-Chairman*, PERCY L. JULIAN; *Director*, RAY GIBBONS; *Associate Director*, HUBER F. KLEMME; *International Relations*, HERMAN F. REISSIG; *Racial and Cultural Relations*, CHESTER L. MARCUS and GALEN R. WEAVER; *Field Secretary*, F. NELSEN SCHLEGEL; and *Publications*, FERN BABCOCK • **OFFICES**: 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York and 2969 West 25th Street, Cleveland 13, Ohio • **Publication Office**: 10th & Scull Streets, Lebanon, Pa. • Re-entered as second class matter August, 1957 at the Post Office at Lebanon, Pa., under the act of March 3, 1879.



A CHURCH IS BORN. It has been said in a number of ways. "A new church has been born." "Two Christian denominations have been united in marriage." "Two fragments of a divided body have been re-born, or resurrected." Whether expressed in literal prose or in poetic metaphor, the fact of the matter is that a most significant event in the history of Protestantism took place in Cleveland, Ohio, on June 25th, when the executive officers of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and those of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches declared that these two communions were joined in the United Church of Christ.

It was a high moment because it bridged historic traditions of creed and polity in a way that heretofore had been done only in Canada and among the "younger churches" of Asia. It brought together groups who traced their lineage to the Continental Reformations of Luther and Zwingli, as well as to the Puritan and Separatist movements in Great Britain. It unites groups whose New World history, sociological composition, and geographic distribution is sufficiently varied to make for a richer, more inclusive fellowship.

The Uniting General Synod was remarkable, however, because all this, no less than the heartache and delay of controversy and court action, was relegated to the background. For through the services of worship and the routine of business alike there seemed to persist a consciousness that this is a unity, prompted by the Holy Spirit, that seeks us, much more than a unity that we have contrived.

The test of our faithfulness to that Spirit's leading will, of course, come in the days ahead. It will be met as we face such questions, as these:

Will our vision be limited by the more impressive statistics of membership, property, and budgets which a larger denomination may be able to present?

Will the commitment, stewardship, and evangelistic outreach of our members and member churches be strengthened under the sway of the Spirit?

Can Christian grace and quickened imagination devise a structure that builds upon but is not bound by previously existing forms, and places major stress on God's purpose and man's contemporary need?

Can we successfully transcend social, economic, and cultural variations so as to capitalize on our opportunities for greater inclusiveness and mutual stimulation?

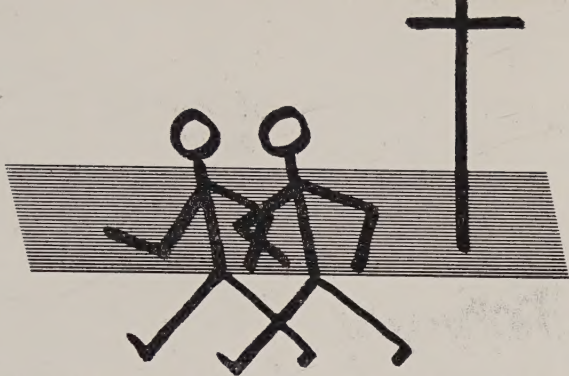
Will our new fellowship witness more faithfully and forcefully to the will of God in our common life, bringing the insights of Christian faith and the devotion of Christian men and women, individually, in congregations, and in the assemblies of the churches, to bear upon the whole life of the whole community—local, national, and worldwide?

Cleveland saw the beginning of the union. It will be nurtured and grow as we build the answers to these questions into the structure and life of the Church.—HUBER F. KLEMME

+ + +

COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION. On June 27th, Dr. Percy L. Julian called to order the first meeting of the Council for Christian Social Action of the United Church of Christ. Following a brief but moving statement as to the significance of the moment, he called on the Reverend Dr. Henry C. Koch, of Washington, D. C., to lead in the constituting prayer. The Council proceeded to elect officers, appoint a staff, and provide for its functioning until the next meeting.

An executive committee was chosen on which the two predecessor bodies, the Council for Social Action (Congregational Christian) and the Commission on Christian Social Action (Evangelical and Reformed), were equally represented. Dr. Koch, chairman of the Commission, was elected chairman of the new Council, and CSA's able chairman, Dr. Julian, was elected vice-chairman. Mrs. F. P. Brasseur was chosen as the secretary, and Mr. Harold C. Kropf, treasurer. Other members of the Ex-



ecutive Committee are Mrs. Charles E. Bingham, the Reverend Myron W. Fowell, Mr. C. B. Newell, and the Reverend Walter S. Press.

Provision was made for the integration of the work of the previously existing staffs with Dr. Ray Gibbons as director, Dr. Huber F. Klemme as associate director, and the following departmental secretaries: the Reverend Herman F. Reissig, international relations; the Reverend Messrs. Chester L. Marcus and Galen R. Weaver, racial and cultural relations; the Reverend F. Nelsen Schlegel, field secretary; Miss Fern Babcock, publications secretary and editor of *SOCIAL ACTION*.

It is the hope of the new Council—so happily meshed in personnel and functioning with the two predecessor agencies—to do as much as possible as one body, leaving to the continuing CC and E&R structures to do only such things as must necessarily be left to them. We hope this policy will commend itself to other agencies of our united fellowship, and that local churches and members will emphasize the UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST and de-emphasize their Evangelical and Reformed or Congregational Christian designations. Both among ourselves and in relation to the world outside we must think and speak of one Church and one fellowship—not of three.

This issue of *SOCIAL ACTION* appears as one of the first publications bearing the imprint of the United Church. Simultaneously *CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY* is being published as the news and program service of the United Council. A list of pamphlets available from both the New York and the Cleveland offices has been issued with the appropriate title, *AVAILABLE*. Institutes and all new publications will be sponsored by the Council for Christian Social Action.

—HUBER F. KLEMMER

the family:



By Elizabeth and William Genné, who are the parents of four children.
Mr. Genné is Executive Director of the Department of Family Life of the
National Council of Churches.

then and now

- *Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the American family?*
- *Are the "good old days" of family life all in the past, or may we hope the "best is yet to be"?*

It is difficult to answer these questions. No one can deny that the first half of the Twentieth Century has brought tremendous changes to family life. Let us take a fresh look at these developments:

What has happened to the family?

When eighteen outstanding students of American family life were asked, "What major changes have taken place in family life in recent times?"¹ they gave sixty-four answers. At least half of them agreed upon these changes in family life: increasing divorce rate; wider diffusion of birth control and/or decline in family size; decline in authority of husbands and fathers; increase in sexual intercourse apart from marriage; increase in the number of wives working for pay; increasing individualism and freedom of family members; increasing transfer of protective functions from the family to the state; and the decline of religious behavior in marriage and family.

Let us look at some of the specific changes in family life as they affect persons at successive stages:

Getting ready for marriage

Young people are marrying sooner and are having their children at an earlier age. In 1890 the median age at first marriage for men was 26.1; in 1949 it was 22.7. The median age at

¹ W. F. Ogburn and M. F. Nimkoff: *Technology and the Changing Family* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1955), p. 4 ff.

first marriage for women in 1890 was 22; in 1949 it was 20.7.

How well prepared are young people for the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood? A half century ago a girl worked beside her mother, and a boy usually worked near his father, as they learned domestic and wage-earning skills. Even if mothers were in the home today, would this type of apprenticeship prepare girls for homemaking and child care?

Why do people get married?

An earlier generation looked for certain substantial skills in a marriage partner. A woman was expected to be a good cook and housekeeper; and a husband a "good provider."

Many modern young people get married for "romance" or "happiness" or "love" (defined in highly emotional terms). Popular songs, stories, movies, and TV shows all keep alive this romantic fairy-tale picture of marriage. There is a single plot to the story: only one "soul-mate" exists in the whole wide world for each person; fate will bring them together; physical attraction will prove that they were meant for each other; and, no matter what handicaps they face, love will conquer all.

How can we help those entering marriage to see that happiness comes only from successful living, from learning and growing together in a thousand and one down-to-earth aspects of daily life? How can we help them understand that love is not a blind emotion into which one "falls" on a moonlit night; but that it is a great force that motivates the intellect as well as the emotions and affects the total personality of an individual; and that love can grow in health and maturity throughout an entire lifetime?

Here is a one-sentence definition of love which we like because it is so practical. We have adapted it from Magoun's definition in his *Love and Marriage*.² It is, in substance:

Love is the overwhelming desire and persistent effort of two people to create for each other the conditions under which each of them can become the person God meant him to be.

Women in marriage

Everyone knows that more and more women are working for wages—married women, too! In 1890, 4.6 per cent of all mar-

² F. A. Magoun: *Love and Marriage* (New York: Harper, 1948), p. 4.

ried women were employed outside the home. In 1950, 26.8 per cent were so employed. This means that sixty years ago only one out of twenty-two women worked outside the home, while today the ratio is one out of four.

Statistics do not begin to tell the story. Every woman who works, be she single woman, wife, or mother, has her own reasons for working. Many women are perplexed and troubled. Sidonie Gruenberg and Hilda Krech, that well known mother-daughter writing team, have given us this picture:³

Their problem is not only the very real one of finding time and energy to do more than care for their homes and their children. They are disturbed by the very *wish* to do more and to have more than they already do and have. Some of them, indeed, feel guilty if they long to get out of the house once in a while and work with other adults. For, if they do, they are told that they *prefer* outside activities to the children because "they are unconsciously rejecting" their children.

Discussion of the issue of "home or career" is often unrealistic and highly emotional in tone. It is often presented as though it involved two mutually exclusive choices, and implies that only a woman who is selfish and unmotherly would want to work outside the home. Certainly we cannot push women back to 1890. As Gruenberg and Krech say:

What many seem to have forgotten, somewhere along the line, is that *to be a complete mother, one must also be a complete woman*. For the sake of children and husband, as well as for herself as a person, a woman must develop more than the housewifely and maternal side of her nature. Yet, simple though this may sound, it is not an easy thing to do. It is not easy to juggle time and energy and attention in an efficient way. It is not easy to keep one's goal clearly in sight through the myriad demands of home and children and job.

It is no wonder that many women today feel like pioneers, blazing a trail toward a more complete fulfillment of their womanhood—with little to guide them except an inner urge to become the persons that God meant for them to be.

Men in marriage

If women are pioneers, they are not alone. Men also feel they are exploring an unknown continent.

Some men feel as though they have been left to wander in a

³ S. M. Gruenberg and H. S. Krech: *The Modern Mother's Dilemma*, Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 247, p. 2 ff.

deserted no-man's land, stripped of all the prestige and respect that was accorded to grandfather as head of the house, protector and provider for his wife and family, and the undisputed authority over all those who dwelt beneath his roof.

Even those men who have no desire to wield a traditional authority resent the way the male of the species is ridiculed in story, stage, and screen—and in comic books. Men look, almost in vain, for any serious help to guide them in adjusting to their wide-ranging wives, the pioneer women.

The man, also, must be a pioneer to discover new forms of relationship with his wife. Creative cooperation can replace domination. The man must find new ways of fulfilling and expressing his masculinity without feeling threatened or defeated by the acceptance of his wife as an equal partner.

How can masculinity be adequately felt and expressed? One of the most hopeful signs comes from within the modern home. Rearing children, even infants, is no longer exclusively a woman's job. New fathers are learning the deep satisfactions that can come from close association with their children. They are learning how husband and wife can complement each other in providing both the masculine and feminine elements in their child's development.

Children in the family

One of the great facts of modern times that confounded the experts is the "baby boom." During the depression, with a declining birth rate, the population experts were predicting a stable or a decreasing population and pointed gravely to the dire consequences that would result. Instead, the birth rate has been exceptionally high during the last ten years.

What has caused the "baby boom"? A number of factors contributed to this phenomenon. Among them are economic prosperity and the giant strides made in maternal and child care.

It was five times safer to have a baby in 1948 than it was in 1915—and the rate continues to improve. In 1915, 100 babies died during the first year of life for every 1,000 live births. In 1948, only 32 died per 1,000 live births.

Child care and health habits have greatly improved. There has been a great out-pouring of interest in child-study groups, nurseries, PTAs and similar organizations. Interest began with

infant care and has moved up the age-scale until now the focus is on teen-agers.

The family in the community

Just as "no man is an island" so we have come increasingly to realize that no family lives alone. Each family is linked to the past by its ancestors, and to the future by its children. And every family is linked to every other family under the sun in the complex relationships of our modern culture.

We are accustomed to saying in a broad, general way, "The family is the basic unit of society," but this comes to a sharp focus in our immediate neighborhood. When one child is filled with fear, suspicion, and hate, the whole neighborhood tends to become infected with these diseased emotions. When neighbors are calloused, cold, and indifferent, everyone suffers. We cannot think of our homes as castles set apart in splendid isolation. We must think of them as living organisms drawing from and giving nourishment to similar organisms around them.

The church and the family

Just as circuit riders ministered in new and unconventional ways to pioneer families, so the church of today must move out to the new horizons of our society: to the dying inner city, to booming suburbia, to the neglected rural areas; wherever there are families, there the church must go.

And it must go—not to scold those who fail to understand the traditional form and language of the church—but to minister in the spirit of the living Christ. It must be ready to meet the needs of each age and stage of family experience.

Durability of the family

As we look back over the past forty years with two world wars and a depression and remember what they have meant in terms of human suffering and frustration, we realize the strength and durability of the family. Rather than being surprised at evidences of instability and disruption within families, we stand in reverence before the divine urge that draws men and women together in marriage.

families on the move

Americans are on the move! No longer do most of us expect to spend our entire lives in the same house, as did some of our fathers. There was a time when one of the drawbacks attributed to the ministry was its mobility. Today, many ministers find that they are among the more stable citizens of their communities. The fact that 20 per cent of our people move every year poses serious problems of adjustment.

Mobility within communities

One kind of mobility is that which occurs within communities. In some of our newer areas an increasing number of families seem to change houses almost as casually as they purchase new model automobiles. The Countryside Church of Omaha is located in a seemingly stable community where 98 per cent of the homes are owned by their occupants. Even here there is a constant movement within the community, and in and out of the community. One of our active church families is now enjoying its fifth new home in the past six years!

Change in the character of the community has been inexorably taking place, as it does in all urban areas. The church name of Countryside was chosen in a day when the parish was actually open country, with some small residential developments scattered here and there. A number of country homes which were semi-estates gave the area its distinctive character. With the end of the Korean war and the development of a first-rate school system, the population of this particular area increased ten-fold. As street after street of more closely built homes sprang up, engulfing the older and sometimes more spacious homes, earlier residents began moving farther out. Now the center of

the area has been annexed by the city, with greatly increased taxes.

The underlying motives for mobility within the community seem to be centered in betterment of the family's setting: more air and space for the children, larger and more novel houses made possible by selling the former dwelling at a slight profit. The results are sometimes a rootlessness, and an over-awareness of the importance of conspicuous consumption on the part of the family. Even in the kindergarten of our church school, there is evidence that the children are aware of economic status. One child recently wanted to thank God for "Daddy's job, which buys us our nice house and cars."

Mobility to new communities

A second kind of family mobility, which may be more typical of the country as a whole, results from the long-distance moves which many families make today. These are the result of changes in employment, or transfers within industrial or commercial firms which seem increasingly to be the lot of the modern "organization man." In the past two weeks I have learned of eight families who are leaving Omaha this month for new homes in Arizona, Missouri, New York, California, Illinois, Wisconsin, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

These transient families face some real problems. Sometimes it is a nuisance to have to buy or sell an expensive home in considerable haste. The insecure feeling that "we won't be here long, either" tempts them to avoid responsibility to the local church, school, or community organization.

Becoming adjusted to a new community, and making new friends is a problem for every age group, but undoubtedly it falls hardest upon those who have just been graduated from high school. Whether they take jobs, or are in college with only occasional visits at home, they find it difficult to make acquaintances in that period of life when it is most important for them to know a wide group of friends.

There are rare families who look forward to every move as an adventure, and who are excited by the possibility of new surroundings and friends. Many more, however, find that too many moves cut short friendships and decrease family stability.

The church can help

The church can assist these mobile families by being alert to their arrival, and seeking to integrate them into its life as rapidly as possible. A nearby minister recently said to me, "They may not live here long, but we put them to work while they are here!" The church provides an initial social center for making friends in the new community. More important, it offers a kind of religious home away from home where church school classes and the worship of God are provided for in a familiar setting. A true church is in itself a kind of family, the "blessed community" of those who own Christ. It is not uncommon for newcomers to have barely become members before bringing to the minister some grievous personal problem.

The church has the responsibility of constantly reminding its members of the vanity of "keeping up with the Joneses," and of turning security-starved families toward the reality which is their real security. The widespread surge toward more Bible study, prayer groups, coffee sessions in homes, in addition to the more formal program of organizations for men, women, couples, youth, and children, can aid in rapid integration of this new constituency.

The stark need of our newer churches for a roof over the Sunday school and the growing congregation has led many of them to teach Christian stewardship with a boldness born of necessity. A real service to many of these moving families would be to offer them channels for informed and constructive giving. One of our families gave a tithe of its ample income for our second building program. As the building neared completion, the inevitable transfer was announced. I wondered, uneasily, what their reaction would be, and was gratified when they declared, "We don't regret giving so heavily at all! That's the way we want to live."

Newcomers can help the church

The high mobility of our times can mean rich, new blood for our churches. The local manager of a nationally known grain firm moved into our community just as the church was being organized, in 1949. He had been a member of a school board which had been in the process of erecting a beautiful new public school in his former community. His transfer to Omaha had

come, well before the structure on which he had worked long hours was completed. Characteristically, he plunged deeply into the work of our church, and became chairman of our building committee. The Sunday before our chapel was dedicated, he was again transferred. Before many months had passed, his successor also became an active member of the church, and served as chairman of the Trustees during a strenuous campaign to secure funds for our second unit. This man's wife also served as president of the Women's Fellowship. Again, a transfer came through before the building was completed. The third manager of this same corporation is now a member of the church. Needless to say, the role of his two predecessors has been clearly pointed out to him!

Force toward ecumenicity

The fact that families move often, and usually attend a church conveniently near their homes, whatever its denominational affiliation may happen to be, has meant that these people form a kind of hidden but very urgent force toward ecumenicity in American church life. Again, their need for rapid assimilation into church life can help churches become more family-centered, with specifically family services and workshops, couples sharing the teaching of Sunday school classes or sponsoring youth fellowship groups.

Letters of transfer

As ministers become aware of the degree of mobility that now seems normal, they can surely do a more conscientious job of following these moving families with letters to the churches where they are moving. Three thousand families have moved into my school district in the past eight years. I could count the letters received from their former ministers upon the fingers of one hand.

The mobility of our families, for all its hazards, is not necessarily unfortunate. If the family is deeply grounded, through its church relationship, in its real, abiding security, even the transitoriness of friendship and of life itself need not be frightening. All of us are, as the writer of *Hebrews* made plain, but "pilgrims and exiles upon the earth." This is the nature of our calling.

social action

Two family experiences of a decade ago, when our children were in junior high school, have produced some excellent social action dividends during the intervening years. At the time, we thought of these experiences in terms of pleasurable education. In retrospect they seem to have contributed to action projects of some social consequence.

Inside view of the world

The occasion of the first experience was a family visit to the Maparium in the publications building of the *Christian Science Monitor* in Boston. The Maparium, a large global map of the world, is thirty feet in diameter, made of six hundred and eight colored fused glass panels set in a framework of bronze. As visitors stand on the walk of French structural glass that constitutes a kind of diameter inside the sphere, all the countries of the world are colorfully portrayed around them on the inside of the illuminated sphere in their exact geographical relationships. A half hour *inside* this global map studying the countries of the world made a deep impression upon us.

The second experience occurred during a visit to the United Nations. We spent a whole day touring the buildings, examining exhibits of the work of various U.N. agencies and listening through the ear phones to the English interpretations of addresses delivered in many different languages. The children brought home an assortment of literature, small flags, and a large chart depicting the structure of the United Nations.

From interest to family projects

It is impossible in this brief article to trace the relationships between these two family experiences and later friendships with foreign students, the sponsorship of several families of

in the family

displaced persons and refugees, and new interest in certain missionary ventures. There can, however, be no denial of the fact that vital experiences of social education can be counted on to produce worthwhile projects in social action. When such educational experiences take whole families *inside* problem situations so that the family response is one of empathy as well as sympathy the results are likely to be substantial and enduring. This fact is well illustrated in the remarkable results achieved by many Massachusetts families who have befriended and aided alcoholics, entertained mentally ill people in their homes as a transition from institutional treatment to family adjustments, and helped prisoners following their release from penal institutions.

The *inside* educational approach is equally productive of good results in social reform and cultural progress. When families provide good living facilities for school teachers, they help to strengthen public school education. When families cultivate friendly relationships with families of different color, race, or nationality backgrounds, rich dividends in better intergroup relations are forthcoming.

Social action strengthens family unity

Families usually arrive at a better understanding of themselves when their members work, play, and carry on meaningful activities together. The more socially creative such activities are, the richer may be the sense of family fellowship and the stronger the feeling of family unity. The building of a better community and a better world should be every family's business. Christian family life achieves its own best development and realizes its own deepest satisfactions when its outreach is toward a more Christian social order.

By Elmer J. F. Arndt, Professor of Historical Theology and Ethics, Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, Missouri.



Christian teaching on marriage

When we speak of marriage as holy matrimony, we are indicating that marriage belongs to the sphere of the sacred. It has its basis in a structure of existence divinely ordained for the temporal life of humanity. Marriage and the family—husband, wife, and children—are expressions of God's eternal purpose of harmony and symbols of his purpose of unity as revealed in Christ. They are grounded in God's creative activity and are symbolic of his reconciliation in Jesus Christ.

God's intention for marriage

Yet marriage and the family as they actually are in human experience are far from being unambiguous and perfect expressions of God's intention. If, on the one hand, the Christian church has the duty of holding before men the divine intention

for the family, a Protestant ethic for the family must continue its unfinished business of ridding itself of literalism and legalism. "Moral seriousness" and "freedom from compromise" are not equatable with a legalistic approach; and "evangelical freedom" is certainly not libertinism. Indeed, legalism is a poor protection against the disintegrating forces of human lusts, which are skilful in devising ways of using codes for their own ends. The moral problems of marriage and the family are greatly modified by the recognition of the universal sinfulness of all that we call marriage and family.

The Christian understanding of marriage has its center in the principle that family relations are to exemplify and aspire to embody the spirit of love and sacrifice. This is the point of the apostolic teaching given in the *Letter to the Ephesians*. A succinct summary of *Ephesians* 5:21-33 is: In their relations to each other, husbands and wives are to be controlled by reciprocal love and service, reflecting the love of Christ for his church and of the church for Christ. (It is a misunderstanding of this passage to see in it an advocacy of the husband's authority over the wife.) And a similar summary of *Ephesians* 6:1-4 which deals with children and parents is that the necessary discipline is to be carried out in the spirit of love inspired by Christ. The "great mystery" (which Moffatt translates as a "profound symbol") of marriage is that it typifies Christ's relation to his church.

Jesus, in opposition to the view that marriage is a contract which may be dissolved, cited *Genesis* 1:27 and 5:2. God has created male and female (there is the element of diversity) and so structured existence that husband and wife become one. The sex difference is ordered so that diversity is to lead to unity. Is it not true of sexual love even in sinful corruption that the lover wills to belong to the beloved only? That the relationship between husband and wife is a genuinely human relation, and not a merely biological or sexual relation, is indicated in the sensitive account given in *Genesis* 2:18-25. The animals are not fit helpers for man. So God creates woman not out of the dust of the earth but from man himself. And the man accepts her as his helpmeet. Husband and wife are not objects to each other; rather they are subjects to each other, persons (not things) who enter into a relationship based on acceptance.

Marriage, consequently, is a responsible relation of a personal nature given with God's creation of human beings. Monogamous marriage has its basis in God's purpose, which includes the considerations that monogamous, indissoluble marriage provides the best basis for the well-being of the family and for the self-realization of the husband and wife.

Why monogamy?

That the right relation between the sexes is an exclusive, life-long relationship between one husband and one wife is certainly not something which can be taken for granted, even when, as in America, that view is given public approval. We should make a serious effort to be clear about the ground for insistence on monogamy. Further, the Christian conception of monogamy is not an easy one. For what is involved is the combination of sex-love with Christian love in obedient reverence for God's order. Such a combination involves the consecration of sex-love to the service of a love of God and neighbor-love. It calls for self-sacrificial service of each of the marriage partners to the other. Such disciplining and, indeed, transformation of sex-love is not an easy achievement.

Now while the evidence is strong that monogamy provides

Love is reverence: it keeps its distance even as it draws near; it does not seek to absorb the other in the self or want to be absorbed by it; it rejoices in the otherness of the other.—H. RICHARD NIEBUHR.

the most advantageous relation from the standpoint of the moral and spiritual education of children, this consideration is not sufficient for monogamy. True as it is that the "natural" end of marriage is the propagation of children ("Be fruitful and multiply."—*Genesis* 1:28), there are childless marriages, children do grow up into adulthood and leave the parental home, and, most important of all, it is hardly adequate to ground the indissolubility of the marriage bond on a consideration external to it, even though it be the "natural" consequence of it.

Nor is the nature of human sex-love, understood at its best, a sufficient ground for monogamy. For while it is true that a genuine natural love does want the beloved wholly for itself,



yet no lover can guarantee the permanence of his feeling. Moreover, genuine as the need for community is, that need can be met apart from the family—as it so often actually is. Certainly, a marriage without love is not the ideal. Yet it is with good reason that the Christian marriage rite stresses faithfulness: the vow of each partner to be faithful to the other “according to God’s holy ordinance.”

Christian basis for monogamy

Christian faith sees the reason for the union of one man with one woman in the fact that each of us knows himself to be irrevocably bound up with father and mother. To them each owes his human existence, not merely his biological existence but his existence as a human subject. And father, mother, and child each know that they are bound together in a unique way. The bond may be broken but the knowledge of that bond still binds them together. This given element in the structure of human existence is understood in Christian faith as an indication that God wills the union of man and woman to be an exclusive, life-long association characterized by mutual love and personal responsibility. Christian faith understands God’s purpose as existence in community. To that end he directs human sexuality. He implants in this impulse the tendency to the personal: a relation of reciprocal responsibility whose bond is fidelity. Marriage is the divinely established school to teach man the mean-

ing of the personal as life in community. In it, God also gives to human beings a share in the miracle of creation; for children are a "blessing."

Marriage falls short

The actuality of marriage is far from what it ought to be. The corruption of sex, in itself good, into lust; the self-centeredness of man as he is; the lust for power; the gross and refined forms of self-love: all these are forms of sin. The sober recognition of this universal sinfulness within (as well as outside) marriage has led reflective Christians to the view that marriage is a "remedy for concupiscence." One of the blessings of marriage is that it provides for a tempering and disciplining of man's disordered sex life. It is the better way compared to suppression on the one hand and anarchy on the other.

Oppose rigid legalism

To recognize the universality of sin means also to recognize that God's demand is not to be identified with the civil law or the rigidities of any legalism. Law is important; but God's demand in the concrete instance cannot be discovered by deduction from a law. And, knowing that we are all sinners, we have all the more reason to be merciful towards those who obviously break the law.

Limitations of space forbid any mention of the specific problems connected with marriage and the family which confront us today—much less a discussion of them. The same limitations prevent consideration of the problems for the family to which the nature of our society has given rise.

Produce conditions favorable to the family

The Christian community will be seriously concerned, not only to nurture its own families to the end that they be both symbols of and approaches to Christian community, but also to devote itself to bringing into being conditions favorable to the well-being of families outside its fellowship. This active concern, whether it be with the moral environment, with housing, with mobility of the population, or the economically enforced postponement of marriage, is a manifestation of neighbor-love, of life in community of which Christ is the inspirer.



Billy Graham

That a sincere young man trained in fundamentalist schools should be satisfied with a narrowly individualistic and impossibly literalistic interpretation of Biblical religion is not surprising. Nor is it surprising that with the help of an attractive personality, histrionic gifts, and the latest smooth techniques of Madison Avenue, he should bring thousands to the support of his evangelistic crusades. What is surprising and a bit disheartening is the apparent belief of leaders of the Protestant Council of the City of New York and, even, of some staff members of the National Council of Churches that the preaching of Billy Graham represents a valid and helpful interpretation of the Christian faith.

In thousands, perhaps the majority, of Protestant churches in all parts of the country there is no clear teaching, either on the character of the Bible or on the interrelationship of individual persons and society. Hence, even if the minister knows better, his people see nothing wrong in preaching that answers every theological question with "the Bible says" and every social question with the assurance that its solution waits only for more individual conversions to Christ. But in the offices of New York's Protestant Council are men and women who never in their own teaching and practical work would dream of taking this approach. They do not carry a Bible into every meeting, gesture with the Bible, talk "Bible" in Billy Graham fashion, until the Bible, instead of being a rich resource of insight

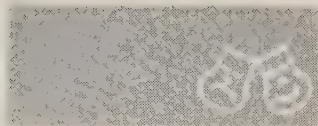
By **Herman F. Reissig**, International Relations Secretary,
Council for Christian Social Action, United Church of Christ.

for intelligent people, becomes almost a fetish whose presence in the hand or in the home is the first mark of salvation. They know that commitment to Christ is not accomplished, in any really significant fashion, apart from serious study and action in the area of specific social relationships.

Did the Protestant leaders of New York hear the evangelist the night he preached on Belshazzar's Feast and observe that, even with such a text, the preacher's warnings and pleas were related to not one single concrete situation confronting the people in their community, in the nation, and in the world? What did they think when the sermon rose to its most dramatic pitch in the solemn, vividly acted-out assurance that "every night God writes down in a book all you have thought or done"? (You could almost hear the crackle of the turning pages as the preacher crouched over the imaginary book.) This is not permissible hyperbole or justified material symbolization of a spiritual truth. This is wretched misrepresentation of the God revealed in Christ, as well as an insult to any mature intelligence. If someone answers that by such means some people are moved in the right direction, what becomes of the frequent insistence that the end does not justify the means?

That some men and women will begin a better life as a consequence of Billy Graham's appeals may be freely granted. The fact does not modify the conviction of the writer of this article that this kind of evangelism does more harm than good. The reasoning of some Protestant leaders runs like this: "We need many kinds of approach to people. Graham may not be able to reach the intellectuals. It isn't the kind of teaching I would do—or could do—but it reaches and helps many people and, therefore, we should welcome and support it." Which, it seems to me, is equivalent to saying: "All that modern research has told us about the Bible is of slight importance. If a popular evangelist puts the Book once more in chains, that's all right with us. And if he sets at naught the slow, difficult reformation in Christian thinking that is summed up in the words 'social action,' that's all right, too."

In private life, in intention and dedication, Billy Graham is no doubt above reproach. However, to him as a religious leader, his work blessed and supported by official agencies of the churches, our response ought to be a thumping "No!"



Long Day's Journey Into Night

To discuss Eugene O'Neill's powerful drama in the same article with a television family like "Father Knows Best" would annoy any qualified critic.

Perhaps such an awkwardness of comparison will be forgiven, however, in a piece that is trying to peer at dramatizations of American family life through the lens of Christian doctrine.

Let me confess immediately an undiluted admiration for *Long Day's Journey into Night* as a work of art. This autobiographical account of the four Tyrones (really the four O'Neills—Eugene, his brother and his father and mother) is the kind of effortless, inevitable development of interlocking love and passion that immediately authenticates it as rare, tragic writing. It is the story of one day in the life of the Tyrones in their summer seaside home. The day begins with hope—mainly because Mrs. Tyrone, who has long been under the curse of drug addiction, seems to have managed a successful cure. As the day progresses each member of the family is revealed, and indeed reveals himself in the depths of his own weakness. The father is seen as a stingy, brag-

ging failure. The older son, wasted into incompetence by the terror of his mother's illness and his own alcoholism, destroys the image his younger brother possesses of him. The younger son, Eugene, himself discovers he has tuberculosis and faces his own selfish romanticism. Mrs. Tyrone retires forever into the dream world of drugs. Each member of the family deeply loves the others. Each member quarrels with and fails the others. On the surface it is hardly a depiction of ideal family life. And yet there is about this play a mood of such compassion, such a depth of understanding, that it seems to me really redemptive. It spares no nerve of suffering, and yet there is not one false note of sentimentalizing or moralizing or seemingly even of dramatization for its own sake. It is a play about Christian love in its most powerful form, namely, forgiveness.

It is not at all surprising that O'Neill should dedicate it thus:

For Carlotta, on our
12th Wedding Anniversary

Dearest: I give you the original script of this play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood. A sadly inappropriate gift, it would seem, for a day

celebrating happiness. But you will understand. I mean it as a tribute to your love and tenderness which gave me the faith in love that enabled me to face my dead at last and write this play—write it with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrones. These twelve years, Beloved One, have been a Journey into Light—into love. You know my gratitude. And my love!

Gene

Robert Young, Jane Wyatt, and their three TV children in *Father Knows Best*, never pretend they are involved in great drama. The series is a low pitched, pleasant depiction of upper middle class American life that is often genuinely funny. It is far and away one of the best of such shows because it does not depend on caricature or slapstick to achieve this. Father is not a fool nor is there a comic, ebullient son. Each member of the family is seen as an individual with gentle faults and plucky virtues. The situations are not contrived, but often grow out of the daily ironies of American middle class culture. This series is often cited as a good wholesome family show and it is in the very "wholesomeness" of the approach that its greatest inadequacies exist. It is probably unwarranted cavilling to want from a vehicle that never pretends to be more than entertainment some deeper penetra-

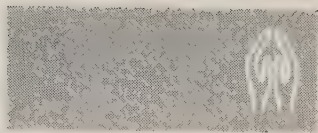
tion of the American family, and yet it is the popular arts that mirror our self-images.

"Father Knows Best" perpetuates essentially a flat world of "playing house." Both the setting and delineation of character have so many limitations imposed by the idealized world of TV Americans that nothing else is possible.

Two important aspects of modern family life are missing because they are not proper in this idealized view of human nature. One is any evidence of neurotic behavior or deep faults of character structure which would give the personalities individuality or move them into focus of involvement with others. The other area is the complete absence of ultimate questioning or awareness of religious meaning.

What does indeed seem to come clear from any comparison of the Tyrones and the TV American is the shallowness of that field of interest generally called "Christian family life." Togetherness and the family altar, democratic decision making, and mature love seem shibboleths of a very shabby sort, when one confronts the human hearts broken open by O'Neill. Mr. Young and company live out their dream life. Somehow the Christ who turned his family away, the Christ who was guest in the Bethany home of Lazarus, seems to know these Tyrones.

—ROBERT W. SPIKE



1. Scripture Readings

Genesis 24
Deuteronomy 6:4-9
Ruth 1
Luke 15:11-32
I Corinthians 13:4-7
Ephesians 6:1-4

2. Hymns

"For the Beauty of the
Earth"
"I Would Be True"
"Rejoice Ye Pure in Heart"
"Thou Gracious God Whose
Mercy Lends"
"Father in Heaven Who
Lovest All"

3. Suggested themes

The Church and Home as
Allies
Parents' Best Gifts to Their
Children
Friends and Foes of the
Christian Family

4. Quotations

a *What I Want My Chil-
dren To Remember
About Home*

- That their father and mother loved each other.
- That the reason home was a happy one was because

we all worked to keep it so.

- That each child was given every possible opportunity to develop his own personality.

- That each child's personal possessions were inviolable, if kept in the place allotted to them.

- That the books in the house were to be read if handled rightly, and there were no shelves under lock and key because of questionable contents.

- That absolute truth abode there; no earnest questioner, however young, was put off with subterfuge or evasion.

- That we believed in hospitality, in spite of any extra labor involved, and that our friends loved to come to us.

- That Sunday was the happiest and most restful day in the week, and that we all looked forward to its coming because it was the day we always spent together with father in the midst.

- That though father and mother worked hard and long at their respective tasks, they found time every day to keep informed on current events, to read good

books, to think things through to logical conclusions and to pray.

—ANONYMOUS

b *The Marriage Vow*

That promise (your marriage vow) made up for your faults. And the promise I gave you made up for mine. Two imperfect people got married and it was the promise that made the marriage. . . . When our children were growing up it wasn't a house that protected them and wasn't our love that protected us. It was that promise.

—From *The Skin of Our Teeth*
by THORNTON WILDER

c *The Child's Religion*

The religion of a child depends on what its mother and its father are, and not on what they say. . . .

The child sees what we are, behind what we wish to be. He is a magnifying mirror. This is why the first principle of education is: train yourself; and the first rule to follow if you wish to possess yourself of a child's will is: master your own.

—AMIEL'S JOURNAL

5. Prayers

Remember the ways by which God has blessed your

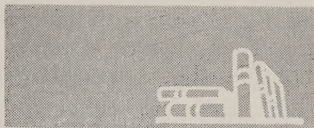
life through your home, and give thanks:

O God, who hast taught us to call thee Father, we thank thee that thou hast set thy children in families. We thank thee for our own home; for the joy and strength that have come to our life through home; for the love and sacrifice of parents; for the comradeship of brothers and sisters.

Hear us now as we ask thy blessing for the members of our own family, and bring before thee the needs of each as they are known to us. . . . (Naming each.)

O thou who art the Father of all, we pray thee for the homeless; for those who have never known the joy of home; for those who have wandered far from the homes of their childhood. We ask thy pity and mercy for all whose homes have been made unhappy through their own folly or the sins of others. May the homes of our nation be set free from impurity; from intemperance; from gambling; from foolish luxury. May they find their true joy in the love of thee and the rule of Christ. We ask it in his name.

—BERNICE and ALBERT J.
PENNER



How Christian Parents Face Family Problems, by J. C. Wynn. *The Westminster Press*, 1955, \$2.50.

Pastoral Ministry to Families, by J. C. Wynn. *The Westminster Press*, 1957, \$3.75.

Ordinarily a book reviewer would deal with books of several authors; that is, one would if it were not for the fact that there is such a person as John Charles Wynn and that his two books are among the best in the field of marriage and family life.

J. C. Wynn is a delightfully sound and scholarly expert in the area of family life. These two books prove it. The more recent book, *Pastoral Ministry to Families*, deals with many of the matters for which pastors and others responsible for providing an adequate ministry to families have been seeking help. The chapter headings make that plain: "The Church as the Family of God," "The Family in Common Worship," "The Pastoral Care of Church Families," "The Pastor as a Family Counselor," "Preparation and Guidance for Marriage," and "Christian Marriage and Marriage Counseling."

This is no book written for the rarefied atmosphere of the ivory tower. Its pages were hammered out in the give-and-take of hundreds of Pastor's Seminars held all over the United States.

One of the most helpful chapters, particularly for the pastor, is the closing one on the "Pastor as a Family Man." This Chapter ought to be read by every clergyman and his people.

Not exactly a companion volume, something more akin to a first cousin, is the earlier book, *How Christian Parents Face Family Problems*.

This is the type of book, if one were to judge solely by the title, of which most of us would be wary. Who has the audacity to suggest how Christian parents should deal with family problems? Well, here is one who does but not as an "authority." Rather as one who is the father of three children and, like the rest of us, is honestly seeking the right answers and with God's help attempting to act on them.

Mr. Wynn deals with some of the most perplexing problems—discipline, family conflicts, finances, family worship, sex, interfaith dating. None of these is dealt with in a dogmatic way;

each is treated with understanding. Each chapter abounds with helpful and practical suggestions.

Here is a book forged in the furnace—and I use the word advisedly—of everyday family life. One has only to read the dedication and the foreword to realize that the author knows of that which he speaks. His home—rooted in God—speaks convincingly and persuasively of that which J. C. Wynn knows!

Mental Illness—A Guide for the Family (Rev. ed.) by Edith

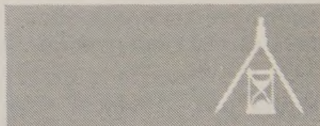
M. Stern. *The National Association for Mental Health, Inc.*, 1957, 50¢.

Today's concern for mental health is rooted in fresh awareness of the problem but also in the ever increasing number of homes in which mental illness strikes.

This booklet deals with practical matters of "When to Hospitalize," "Getting the Patient Admitted," and the like. It ought to be in every minister's library and every church library.

—WILLIAM WIMER

program planning



This issue of *SOCIAL ACTION* is a multi-purpose or multi-use issue if there ever was one. The entire magazine can be used in various ways with almost equal profit by ministers, parents, young adults, study groups, family life committees among others. Here's how—

Ministers ought to read and ponder all the articles. The article, "Christian Teaching About the Family," by Elmer J. F. Arndt could well be the basis of a sermon in the near future or during Family Week, 1958.

This along with J. C. Wynn's book *Pastoral Ministry to Families* (see page 29), provides undergirding not only for the pastor's preaching but also for his entire ministry to families.

- *The Christian Family Life Committee* in the local church carrying the responsibility for the undergirding and enrichment of Christian family life ought not only to read this entire issue, but to use the individual articles as a basis for group study and discussion. This committee is supposed to be the

"authority" on Christian family life; this issue will help it to achieve that status.

The committee might list the people to whom this issue ought to be referred and discuss the various ways in which it can be used within the church. For instance, copies of this magazine might be placed in the literature rack, or the entire issue with subscription blanks sent out to the families of the church; or the article, "Christian Teaching About the Family," might be reprinted and sent out to the entire membership; or the issue might be taken to responsible persons within the congregation such as the program chairmen of the lay organizations, parents' study groups, and the like, and suggestions given as to how the magazine can be used in their particular groups.

- *Parents' Study Groups* might use the various articles as a basis for group discussion for several meetings. However, the group ought to relate the articles to the local church, asking each time: "What does this article say to us, our family life, and our church's family life program?"

- *Consistory or Church Council.* Study ought to be a more integral part of meetings of these groups. This series of articles might well introduce such an element into the meetings. Since

the constituencies of so many churches are transient a church council could study with profit "Families on the Move." After using this article and others like "The Family: Then and Now," the group might examine the present church program in the light of the changing needs and problems posed in these articles to see what modifications ought to be made in the church's program.

- *Family Nights at Church.* A very delightful evening can be rooted in the article, "The Family: Then and Now." Through role-playing or dramatic skits old and new family patterns and practices can be compared. This could be followed by a discussion participated in by the entire family in which the question is faced: How can we incorporate the best of the new patterns and the best of the old?

All of these suggestions might be found to be good but only if adequate preparation—and followup—is made. See that enough issues of the magazine are purchased. See that they get into the hands of the program or committee leaders in sufficient time. Relate the discussion to the local church and community.

Here is a multi-use issue which will be of little use or no use if it is not used well.

—WILLIAM WIMER



call to action

Meet your Congressmen

The recess of Congress is your golden opportunity to become better acquainted with your Congressmen and to help them become better acquainted with the people they represent.

Plan meetings with Congressmen. You can help your Congressmen accomplish the results they desire in a manner they will appreciate. Organize a meeting at your church or in your community to hear and question your representatives about their work in the 85th Congress. Suggest a list of questions in advance which you would like to have discussed. Make them specific. "Which of the administration's proposals did you support,

amend, or oppose? What do you think needs to be done for revision of immigration legislation, for the School Construction bill, or for responsible use of union welfare funds?"

The next best thing to arranging your own meeting is to form a group from your church to attend a meeting sponsored by some other community organization.

Write letters to the editor. Another possibility is to discuss issues before the 85th Congress in open letters to the editor of your local paper. Send copies to your Congressmen inviting their reply or comment.

The months before January are a precious period for exercising our citizenship in relation to the members of Congress.

—RAY GIBBONS

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Mar. 58